



Muriel Levey, a former member of SI Liverpool, is featured in this month's #WhoIsShe?

Members of a certain age might remember her as the children's broadcaster "Auntie Muriel"!

You can read more interesting information about Muriel in the latest SIGBI newsletter.



Download President Johanna's We Stand UP for women, Believe to Achieve logo on your stationery and marketing materials. You can download it from the website. Follow the link to the large version and right-click then "Save Image As". Or log into the members' area then go to the Marketing Resources top level page, where you will find it: • President Johanna's Logo (JPEG) • Marketing Resources Page in members' area



SI Liverpool's Award-winning Project



At the recent Virtual Belfast Conference, SI Liverpool's Project **"Environmental Research (Nature Based Solutions)"** was awarded the Federation's best project for Planet.

The club is partnering with students from Liverpool University on environmental research as part of the nature-based solutions for urbanised areas, helping to mitigate the effects of climate change.

As the temperatures rise, cities like Liverpool are investing in "cooling" measures to offset the rise by using natural solutions. Club members are involved with research, until 2022, which will feed into future planning strategies.

At the same time, the club has formed a partnership with Friends of Prince's Park. This is an inner-city park, which until 2004, was neglected, subjected to vandalism and the lake left stagnant.

Since then, thanks to the Friends, it is being rejuvenated and replanted. SI Liverpool are providing 100 mixed species of native trees. The first of our larch trees will be planted in November, with members helping with that. Pictures highlight some of the Urban Greenup research as well as Prince's Park.

The club are delighted to leave such a legacy in celebration of 100 years of Soroptimism!



A Message from our New Region President

“Facing Challenges, Making Changes, Moving Forward Together”

Dear members of South Lancashire Region,



I hope that you and your families are well and that you are all keeping safe during this Pandemic.

When I was asked to summarise my theme for the year ahead in seven words or less it took me a while to finalise this statement of intent because I knew that whatever I decided to set out as the defining theme for South Lancashire Region it would always depend on how COVID-19 impacted on what we could achieve. At first, I thought change and the challenges it brings was the correct order but the more I thought about the Pandemic the clearer it became that it was always going to be the challenges we will have to face that would lead the way.

Looking back to March and the first lockdown I am blown away by the many and varied ways in which our Region has responded to the challenges thrown up by the ever-changing guidelines and regulations that have been issued to help us overcome this unpredictable and invasive virus. Programme Action has become the focus for many clubs who are facing the challenges of keeping their projects on track by finding new and innovative ways of serving their communities whilst ensuring that members remain in contact with each other and are safe and well. Who knew that technology would become the backbone of the way in which we responded to the challenge of maintaining PA progress and club relationships?

At the moment I have four apps for a range of virtual platforms connecting me to the local primary school where I am Chair of Governors, to Governor Services at the Local Authority, to Federation President Johanna and to Soroptimists throughout the Region; it means that I have a wider network to access than ever before and, although I am not technologically savvy at all, I am grateful for the opportunity to be so well and speedily connected. It was lovely to be able to celebrate their 82nd Charter Anniversary with SI Bolton on 6th November, a thoroughly enjoyable evening, and perhaps a blueprint for other clubs to follow in their own inimitable ways.

Technology will allow us to continue to meet, share our vision and be essential to our Programme Action, Charity and Social events. There will still be a PA trophy to be awarded next September and, hopefully, a Rose Bowl Challenge to be met. I am looking forward to the RCM in December and to spending virtual time with you all on as many occasions as possible. Don't forget to complete the PA focus forms, congratulations to SI Widnes for being mentioned in UN dispatches and to SI Liverpool for their best practice award at the Belfast Conference.

Take care in the weeks ahead. There appears to be some light at the end of the tunnel with the prospect of a viable vaccine.

In friendship

Region President Josie

A Message from our Outgoing Region President

Dear fellow Soroptimists of South Lancashire,



When I looked back at my speech as incoming Region President this time last year, I was struck by an overwhelming feeling of poignancy. I'd had such high hopes of 'telling the world...we stand up for women', of visiting clubs and making new friends as well as catching up with old friends, of supporting Clubs to blossom and grow and to getting our voices heard and our message 'out there'!

Little did we know then what was to occur, only a few short months later.

I would like to say that I am proud to have been your Region President this year, and that although I might wish that things had turned out differently, I am immensely proud of all that you have achieved.

You have all worked so hard to look after one another physically and mentally whilst adapting to our new world of lockdowns and tiers! So much Programme Action work has been carried out in support of the most vulnerable people in our local communities and worldwide.

I am constantly amazed at the different ways you have adapted to fundraise for your Programme Action work, such ingenuity!

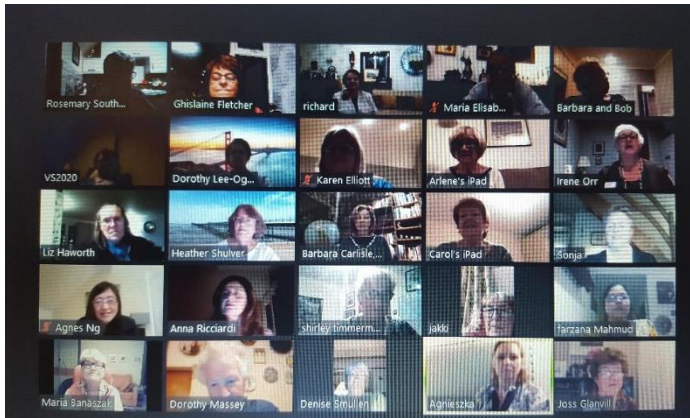
Thank you for all the work you have undertaken this year and for all the support you have given me during these difficult times. I hope the vaccines will allow us to return to a more normal year for Region President Josie, where we can have face to face meetings once again.

I wish you all good health and happiness as we approach Christmas, however you may be spending it this year and hope to see you in March or June!

Immediate Past President Yvonne

Club News from around the Region

SI SOUTHPORT – A Truly International Friendship Night



SI Southport traditionally celebrate Friendship Night in early October, when we come together to celebrate our friendship links with the lighting of candles and an evening of fun and good food. Of course, 2020 was different and the event had to be held virtually.

President Rosemary welcomed members and guests, including representatives from ALL of our friendship links and SIGBI Friendship Link Co-ordinator, Bhaswati Biswas.

The current Covid-19 situation has affected every corner of the world, but nevertheless, Soroptimist clubs were actively supporting, helping and driving projects to ease the trauma.

Each of our guests gave a summary of their clubs and their projects and following each presentation, the friendship link correspondent lit a candle WITH our link clubs, many of whom lit their own candles alongside. Despite the different sizes, compositions, locations and ages of the clubs represented, the projects covered showed some common themes – promotion of education for women and girls, supporting food supply and food banks due to the impact of Covid-19, activities for victims of domestic abuse – Soroptimists working together to support global issues.

We welcomed friends from SI Lisburn (Northern Ireland); SI Dhanmondi Bangladesh – our newest link; SI Caserta (Italy); SI Gdansk (Poland); SI Horsens (Denmark); SI Windermere and District (England)

SIGBI Friendship Link Co-ordinator Bhaswati Biswas then presented on the purpose of friendship links, with a few ideas such as joint projects, sharing good practice, enabling cross-culture as well as, of course, meeting socially. Friendship links develop in many different ways – personal contact, professional contact, meeting at Conferences and so on - based on a desire to collaborate and work with other clubs.

The Chair of our International Committee, Heather Shulver, who organised the evening, concluded the proceedings with a presentation on 'Southport, its club and the town'. SI Southport was founded in 1932, so we are coming up to our 90th anniversary in 2022.

Finally, Bhaswati Biswas lit a candle for SIGBI and President Rosemary Moore lit a candle for Soroptimist International in the presence of our friends from SI Europe, as well as SI Great Britain and Ireland.

It was such a joy to spend a wonderful evening in the presence of our friends from all over the world, share ideas and projects and to enjoy some international interaction.

It's such a joy to be a Soroptimist!



Contributed by Ghislaine Fletcher

SI LEIGH & DISTRICT – Three of a Kind!

At the recent Virtual Federation Conference, Josie Carter was installed as the new South Lancashire Region President, taking over the Chains of Office (Virtually!) from Yvonne Gibbon.

Josie, a member of SI Leigh & District since 2008, has chosen as her theme for the year; **Facing Challenges, Making changes, Moving Forward together.**

Commemorative gifts of a Swarovski Pen & flowers were presented to President Josie on Remembrance Sunday when several members (social distancing) gathered for the laying of the Poppy Wreath.



It was a proud moment for Club members when President Lynda Lilley asked former Region Presidents' Pat Woodward and Margaret Molyneux to present the gifts to Josie.

We wish Josie every success & happiness during the coming year.

A first for SI Leigh & District members was the decision to lay the traditional Soroptimist Poppy Wreath at Atherton Cenotaph as opposed to the normal Leigh Cenotaph and involvement in the Civic Parade. Due to Covid-19 restrictions all these events had sadly to be curtailed or cancelled.



Local residents, the Royal British Legion and Wigan Council ensure that the Remembrance Garden always has manicured lawns and flowers as a fine tribute to the 435 names on the Cenotaph. These fallen personnel are victims from the 2 World Wars & the Malayan, Iraq and Northern Ireland conflicts.

The photographs show President Lynda laying the Wreath & the other shows the beautiful LEST WE FORGET bench & wicker soldier funded by the British Legion as a fitting tribute to the heroes named on the Cenotaph.



To commemorate 100 years of Soroptimist International, the club is undertaking a Tree Planting project with Wigan based Lancashire Wildlife Trust.

100 trees will be planted in Bickershaw Country Park and School children from the local Primary school have been asked to design a logo of birds & trees which will form the basis of a permanent sign for the proposed small wooded copse.

Launching the project this week during National Tree Week 2020, it is hoped the Soroptimist Centenary banner of 'Bright Past-Brilliant Future' will not only highlight the many International, national and local projects undertaken by Soroptimists in the past 100 years, but by involving young people in this tree planting initiative we are also looking to the future.

Contributed by Margaret Molyneux



SI BOLTON – Endeavour to Help

SI Bolton were unable to hold their Charter Dinner this year so instead held a Zoom Charter Celebration.

Over 40 Soroptimists and friends from around the South Lancashire region, and as far afield as the Seychelles, dressed for the occasion, had drinks and nibbles to hand, and enjoyed an evening of fun and friendship.



The Mayor of Bolton and regional president Josie were welcomed and gave interesting talks on their roles and hopes for the future.

The speaker, Andrew Graystone, describes himself as 'an everyday activist carrying out tiny acts of rebellion' and was both funny and inspirational.

We know that incidents of domestic abuse have risen during the Pandemic, so SI Bolton contacted a local charity, Endeavour, to offer their help.

Endeavour supports women and children to escape from a life of violence and abuse to a better and caring future.

Club members put together bags of essential toiletries and underwear which were then delivered to the charity. They were thrilled and posted thanks on their Facebook page.



Contributed by Carole Swarbrick

SI BOOTLE & DISTRICT – Staying Productive and a Special Thank You



Jenni Pizer was invited to talk to members of the club about her work with the “Tara” project in Nepal.

Many years ago, Jenny and her family travelled to Nepal and became interested in helping the women and girls of the village she visited. She educates the women in the physiology of their bodies, menstruation, and health and hygiene. There was a shroud of mystery regarding the monthly cycle, with females being ostracised from the family during menstruation. Even very young girls, were sometimes locked in outside sheds to avoid contaminating the rest of the family and were not allowed to cook for the family as it was thought to bring

illness to anyone who ate food prepared by females during this period.

With the help of Jenny over many years, the younger women are able to pass on the knowledge to their mothers, sisters and daughters and things are improving. Supplying sewing machines and training, the women have become educators in the village, participating in the production of, and sourcing materials for washable and reusable menstruation sanitary packs. Jenny always looks forward to travelling back and staying in the home of “her family”. R.A.S.A. hosted the meeting and members are seen during the presentation of a cheque to support her work.



A letter of thanks from St. Leonard's for Dr. Gillian Aston

“Gill has been an amazing support and deeply committed volunteer to St. Leonard's Foodbank, in particular. Throughout this pandemic she has volunteered at the Foodbank every week despite potential risks. She is very much respected and loved here. Gillian is pictured with the Volunteer Certificate presented via the Mayor of Sefton in appreciation of her services to the community

Facing up to the Pandemic



During lockdown, Caroline decided to get her sewing machine out and after much trial and error produced over 300 masks from her dining room table. The masks include a “with Compliments/Stay Safe” card with club details along with instructions for using the filter pocket and were distributed to front line workers, primary schools, St. Leonard's Foodbank,

R.A.S.A. (Rape and Sexual Assault) and Sovini. A special version was produced for club members and included some clever advertising for the Club and S.I.



Contributed by Caroline Holmes

SI MANCHESTER is Zooming Marvellous



We held our AGM virtually, welcomed our new members and even managed to 'Change the Insignia', seeing as we had the forethought to have our Incoming and Outgoing Presidents being neighbours with two Soroptimisters on hand!

Photo: President Rose



Our November Club Meeting was Zoomed and we welcomed Hilaria and Sharron Hallam; speakers on organ donation and the new law. Hilaria, one of our members, has needed a kidney transplant and now promotes organ donation. Sharron worked as an organ donation nurse/co-ordinator and is now an organ donation campaigner.



Not forgetting Fundraising whilst doing some zooming Christmas shopping.....



President Rose organised a Zoom Handbag Event for us! Karen Makin brought 'Antonia's Handbags' to our screens (a first for her too!) and pledged a generous percentage of our spend back to our Charities!

We bravely faced the decisions, the handbags were hard enough, but when it came to the scarves & umbrellas.....after 90 minutes Karen finally asked if we'd seen enough, or maybe she was begging for mercy! But, 'Reeessult!'..... funds raised and Christmas shopping done!



Club members took part in an 'Orange the World' social to mark the start of '16 Days Of Activism' Our 'drop in' chats continue on Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons.

Going forward, we have a 'Cook Along' planned as well as the Christmas Party!

And when Zoom just won't do.....it's Masks On!



President Rose and Barbara delivered 30 pyjama sets donated by our Members to Emmeline's Pantry.

contributed by Sue Underwood



SI CROSBY – a Virtual Visit to Italy...

The Club marked the United Nations' (UN) International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women by joining up with Soroptimists in Jesi at a very special event. SI Crosby forged a friendship link with SI Jesi when the Italian club was founded, two years ago.

Women representing community, political and cultural life in Jesi were due to speak at the meeting. Crosby's President Chris Chua-Short gave a short presentation on the Club, focussing on links with Sefton Women's and Children's Aid. In keeping with the UN campaign to 'Orange the World' – eye-catching publicity - members featured 'something orange'.

Cynthia Ashworth, who co-ordinates Crosby's contacts with its link clubs, organised the 'trip to Italy'. "We were delighted to meet up on-screen with our Italian sisters to mark this special UN Day," she said. "We look forward to getting to know each other in person once the pandemic has passed".



...and a Virtual Wine Tasting at Home

Yes, you can have a 'virtual' wine tasting! Thanks to meticulous planning and organisation Crosby's Soroptimists had a great evening.

Twenty screens showed members, friends and family poised with stemmed glasses and six mini-bottles of wine at the ready. 'Sommelier' Dave guided everyone through the tastings – and feedback was lively.



Warm-up bingo used a no-arguments random-number machine. There was a free raffle – and even a game of heads'n'tails Covid-style, using masks.

Quizzes? Of course. No quiz prizes – all just for fun – but Soroptimists like a competitive edge. Having everyone muted while the answers were given out was very odd, though – no heckling!

On-screen sartorial highlights included Christmas tree/turkey hats, twinkling neckwear and sequined jumpers. Seasonal socks were a hidden delight.

President Chris Chua-Short (in festive red and white) thanked our Soroptimister sommelier and all the other behind-the-scenes organisers.

"Everyone entered into the spirit of the evening," she said. "This was billed as a chance to relax, get together and have fun: we did that. The bonus was over £300 raised for our club's service fund."

Contributed by Jenny Stanistreet

SI WARRINGTON - Report back on the SIGBI Annual Conference – A Virtual Belfast Experience

Liz, Rhona and Jackie attended the online conference on 30th - 31st October 2020. Here are some brief highlights of the four keynote speeches, each of which was followed by a Q&A session.

Baroness Brenda Hale opened the conference with her keynote speech: “Celebrating Women in the Law”. It was a fascinating presentation, at times humorous and also sobering, charting the slow but steady rise of pioneering women in the judiciary over the years from the early 1900s to today. Amongst the many anecdotes (particularly the words of misogynist colleagues) Baroness Hale recounted the challenges women still face in the legal profession.



The second keynote speaker of the day was **Professor Susan Black**, with her talk “If I can do it, so can you”. Dr Black left school at 16 with few qualifications due to family problems, yet worked her way up to her position as Professor of Computer Science and Technology Evangelist at the Department of Computer Science at Durham University. She faced challenges all the way. In her experience, she said “the most successful people are those who keep going despite difficult situations. They are people who choose to stay committed to their goals.” She was truly inspirational

Dr Alison Gardner’s keynote speech looked at Modern Day Slavery (MDS) - “Building Communities that are Resilient to Modern Slavery”. She is engaged in raising awareness about this ghastly practice of slavery and is trying to encourage community-based practices to eradicate it. Her presentation was rich in facts and figures about the global pervasiveness of MDS.



The final keynote speaker was **Jane Garvey**, the well-known journalist and “Woman’s Hour” presenter. Her speech, entitled “Speaking Up”, covered her career in radio, a job she really loves and how she worked hard at finding her way into the profession. She was complimentary about Soroptimist achievements. In her Q&A session, she was asked for advice on how to improve our presence on local and national radio. Her answer echoed what we hear frequently, i.e. that our name is our biggest problem because it doesn’t tell people what we do (!!) and that we should persist in approaching radio stations with stories which should be told more widely.

There was also a two-part session split over the two days entitled “A Celebration of Membership”: this PowerPoint presentation provided an impressive overview of what clubs have been doing over the last year, and in particular how they have stayed connected during the Covid19 crisis. SI Warrington’s activities featured in a selection of slides provided by our South Lancashire committee!

All in all, the conference was well worth attending, and the Conference Committee deserve high praise for putting on our first virtual conference and in such challenging times.

Note: If you are able to access the SIGBI website, there is much more information (“blogs”) about the keynote speeches, plus more information about Federation Board presentations.

Contributed by Jackie Alexander

R.I.P. Joan Spiby – a much loved member of SI Warrington



Joan left us on 11th September 2020 at the age of 85 following a valiant struggle against Parkinson's disease. In her 32 years with the Club she held every Officer position and served three terms as Club President. She was a determined advocate of Soroptimism and her knowledge of the intricacies of Soroptimist governing rules was formidable. Her counsel will be greatly missed.

We shouldn't forget that Joan loved the social side of being a Soroptimist too - we thought we would share some photos to remind us of Joan's love of life:



Margaret & Joan singing "Sisters" at a party for Lynn Dunning, Regional President



"Lapsang & Souchong" singing "Two Chinese Soroptimists are we" – Tricia Fahey's "This is your Life"

The Club has made a donation to Parkinson's UK in Joan's memory. Given Joan's length of service, and our 75th Jubilee, we donated £75. Please note that if any of you do still wish to make a personal donation, the **Lasting Memories Tribute Fund** set up by Dr Margaret Emsley on the Parkinson's UK website is still active. As at 17th November the total raised is an impressive **£ 1,670.00**. The site can be accessed via the following link: <https://joan-spiby.muchloved.com>.

Contributed by Jackie Alexander